



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EDT (NOAA)

### **Agricultural Weather Highlights - Thursday - December 19, 2002**

- ***In the West***, another major storm system is approaching the ***Pacific Coast***, bearing high winds and heavy rain. Pastures and winter grains in ***California*** and the ***Northwest*** continue to benefit from recent soil moisture improvements, but most areas east of the ***Cascades and Sierra Nevada*** are suffering from the effects of long-term precipitation deficits, including drought-reduced irrigation reserves.
- ***On the Plains***, scattered showers are ending across ***southern portions of the region***, where soil moisture remains adequate for pastures and winter grains. Meanwhile, mild, breezy, unfavorably dry weather persists on the drought-affected ***northern and central High Plains***, leaving much of the winter wheat exposed to potential weather extremes.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, snow showers linger across the ***upper Midwest***, while a line of showers and thunderstorms stretches from ***Michigan to the lower Ohio Valley***. The precipitation is slowing off-season fieldwork, following a long period of mostly dry weather.
- ***In the South***, showers and locally severe thunderstorms are crossing the ***lower Mississippi Valley***, where as much as 5 inches or rain fell overnight. Wet fields continue to slow fieldwork throughout the ***South***.

**Outlook:** Showers and thunderstorms will accompany a cold front moving into the ***East***, while light snow will linger in the ***upper Midwest***. Meanwhile, a Pacific storm system will bring locally heavy precipitation and strong, gusty winds to the ***West Coast States***, with precipitation spreading into the ***central and southern Rockies*** by week's end. Elsewhere, dry weather will return to the ***southern Plains and Mississippi Valley***. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for December 24-28 calls for below-normal precipitation in the ***northern Plains*** and ***upper Midwest***, while wet weather is forecast in the ***southern Rockies, southern Plains, Southeast***, and along the ***East Coast***. Colder-than-normal weather is forecast in the ***Southwest***, while above-normal temperatures are expected in the ***Great Lakes region, Midwest***, and ***northern Plains***.

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